

Colorblind Ideology and Malleable Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action

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As expressed prejudice declines in the post-civil rights era, considerable social science research has explored the nature of modern racial ideology. One element of today’s racism is the insidious belief that there is no longer racial inequality in America, thus being “blind” to race is seen as ideal (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 2014). Colorblind attitudes have been studied at length, particularly with regards to affirmative action, though no study has yet examined how malleable these attitudes are when people are faced with differing demographic contexts in an academic setting. To fill this void, this survey-based study uses a unique experimental design that poses various racial demographics at a hypothetical college. I use these data to then determine the effect of context on 512 participants’ support for the college to place extra effort into increasing the number of students of underrepresented racial groups. This study reveals that, while colorblind attitudes do predict opposition to such efforts, opposition still wavers significantly depending on the demographics at the college. This suggests that colorblind attitudes toward social policies like affirmative action are more malleable than previously realized. I conclude with discussion of the implications of these findings for contemporary race relations in a “post-race” society.

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What does modern racial ideology look like? At present, the bulk of social science research suggests that although open bigotry toward racial minorities still exists, attitudes about race are more subtle and covert than ever before. In most contexts, it is now socially unacceptable to express explicit prejudice about racial groups (Bonilla-Silva 2014), so research on racism has turned toward methods other than simple self-report, such as the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz 1998). Our dialogue about race and racial inequality in the United States is also seen as a reflection of subtle attitudes as well, as demonstrated in the popular colorblind ideology and the belief in a post-racial society (Bonilla-Silva 2014). Multiple studies (e.g., Awad, Cokley, & Ravitch 2005) have examined how colorblind ideology is used to justify opposition to affirmative action, but few (e.g., Samson 2013) have explored how malleable this connection is based on context or population demographics. Following the common logic that race should never be taken into account for college admissions, does colorblind ideology predict opposition toward affirmative action equally in all contexts? Do people make exceptions if inequality is extreme in the setting in which efforts to improve racial representation are proposed? Does it matter whether white people or people of color are the overrepresented group?

To begin to answer these questions, this study tests the relationship between degree of inequality and support for university efforts to improve representation of underrepresented groups, while taking into account colorblind ideology, the belief in a post-racial society, and one’s own racial identity. By better understanding this relationship, we develop a more refined idea of how colorblind ideology operates, which is a necessary step prior to hypothesizing solutions. The degree of malleability of attitudes and the contexts in which those attitudes change

are potentially helpful in informing the direction we take toward social change and how to approach white privilege as a barrier toward overcoming colorblindness.

Modern Racism

In the latter half of the 20th century, the United States experienced dramatic changes in race relations. For example, the American Civil Rights movement along with broader social and economic shifts contributed to such patterns as the integration of workplaces and reduction of wage gaps (see Farley 2012). As these status inequalities (differences in groups' positions in social systems and society) were reduced, public opinion polls have found declines in expressed prejudice and stereotyping (Bonilla-Silva 2014). White Americans turned to more subtle, socially acceptable ways of expressing their opinions about race and racism. In response, scholars in recent years have sought to understand how individuals in contemporary society think about group characteristics such as race and gender, as well as the implications of those contemporary belief systems. McConahay (1986) describes the underlying assumptions of modern racism, including believing it is an undeniable fact that discrimination is a thing of the past, minorities now have equal opportunities, and minorities are pushing too adamantly with unfair tactics to gain access to places where they are not wanted. Thus, advances made by minorities are perceived as undeserved and social programs designed to alleviate inequality are seen as a form of "reverse discrimination." Built upon this ideology, the term "colorblindness" or "colorblind racism" has emerged as a way for scholars to conceptualize modern racism.

"Colorblindness" is defined as the belief that race should not and does not matter for opportunities in life in a post-civil rights society (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich 2011; Bonilla-Silva 2014). Yet, most social outcomes show grave racial disparities in the United States, including substantial racial wage gaps, housing segregation, and overrepresentation of minorities in

poverty (Farley 2012). Consequently, “colorblindness” ignores the effects of race in a social system that is still racist, a perspective that is easy to adopt when one has the privilege of not experiencing racism (Bonilla-Silva 2014). Any racial inequalities can then be blamed on the minority group, not institutions or society as a whole (Gallagher 2008). Colorblindness is also frequently used as a silencing strategy when whites are told that their race has an impact on their lives (Pincus 2003). When prejudice is directed toward the majority group (usually on an overwhelmingly individual basis) or when attention is drawn to the group’s privilege, it is often called “reverse discrimination” and there is an increased call for colorblindness as a method of ignoring social structure. For example, in response to the concept of “white privilege,” white people will often cite Martin Luther King, Jr. and say, “I thought we were supposed to judge people by the content of their character,” as if talking about racism is in itself racist. The colorblind perspective sees racial and ethnic group membership as irrelevant to the ways individuals are treated, which is appealing to many because it is consistent with American values of individualism and meritocracy (Schofield 1986). However, it easily leads to a misrepresentation of reality in ways which allow discrimination against minority group members. Racial categorization and subsequent judgment often occurs subconsciously (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz 1998), so when we believe it does not happen at all, we ignore the ways in which we treat people differently on the basis of racialization. In daily interactions, race is often considered a taboo topic (particularly with white people), so a colorblind perspective minimizes discomfort while ignoring real disparity and often leading to a failure to prioritize diversity and multiculturalism (Schofield 1986).

Extensive research on colorblind ideology by Bonilla-Silva (2014) analyzed interviews with college students and found four central frames used to articulate colorblindness. “Abstract

liberalism” uses liberal ideals of equal opportunity and freedom of choice to oppose affirmative action. If every individual has the opportunity to attend college if they choose regardless of race, then affirmative action is not necessary because the system is fair (whites are just coincidentally the most qualified). The frame of “naturalization” asserts that racial phenomena like segregation are natural occurrences that each racial group participates in equally. Thus, if a school is 99 percent white, perhaps racial minorities simply do not wish to attend that school and prefer to “stick to their own kind.” The third frame, “cultural racism,” uses perceived cultural differences between racial groups (e.g., blacks do not value education) to explain away inequality. Lastly, “minimization of racism” suggests racial discrimination (particularly on an institutional level) is no longer a central factor affecting life chances and anyone who says otherwise is “playing the race card.” An understanding of these frames typically guides research on whites’ attitudes toward affirmative action.

Colorblindness and Affirmative Action

Colorblind ideology is clear in the debate over college admissions, as many people are adamantly against consideration of race when evaluating an applicant because they believe minority groups are no longer disadvantaged (see, for example, Bonilla-Silva 2003). Resistance to affirmative action has persisted among whites at the same time that their endorsement of racial equality in *principle* and opposition to explicit racial bigotry has increased (Bonilla-Silva 2014). However, the frame of equality is often based primarily on the idea of equal opportunity, not equal outcomes. Colorblind ideology makes unequal outcomes acceptable based on the belief that, since discrimination is no longer a barrier, racial differences are the fault of the minority (cultural racism) or natural processes (naturalization). This is illustrated in whites’ conditional support for diversity and affirmative action. Stoker (1998) explains that when whites are asked

for their opinion on racial quotas (an illegal practice but perhaps the most common layperson conceptualization of what affirmative action is), the context given as to *why* affirmative action seems necessary is sometimes vital. If affirmative action is recommended as a response to underrepresentation, whites are more likely to oppose it than they are if it is recommended for a company that has discriminatory employment policies. Stoker interprets these results as a reflection of participants' belief that underrepresentation is the result of inferior black candidates.

But what about opposition to affirmative action in relation to colorblindness? Awad, Cokley, and Ravitch (2005) confirmed the strength of colorblind ideology as a predictor of attitudes opposing affirmative action. Although colorblind attitudes are seen as a direct consequence of racial prejudice, they introduce a new element of appeals to fairness into the debate on affirmative action. This emphasizes the importance of nuance and complexity in understanding the ideas behind the feelings individuals have about affirmative action. Neville et al. (2000) also notes the importance of recognizing unconscious racial prejudice as related to, but *distinct from*, a distorted view of race relations and an ideology called "colorblindness." Opposition to affirmative action in employment is also strongly associated with being white, political conservatism, the belief that affirmative action involves quotas or preferential hiring, and the expectation that affirmative action will hurt company performance (Kravitz, Klineberg, Avery, Nguyen, Lund, & Fu 2000).

Malleability

Emerging research has sought to understand how support for particular policy wavers depending on context or language used to describe the policy. For example, Peffley and Hurwitz (2007) examined the effect of framing on attitudes toward capital punishment: whites become more supportive of the death penalty upon being told that it discriminates against blacks. Peffley

and Hurwitz attributed this in part to whites' resistance toward acknowledging that institutional racism is still a problem (an element of colorblind ideology), leading them to reject that argument with such force that they end up expressing more support for the death penalty than when no argument is presented at all. The strength of the colorblind ideal and the belief that racism no longer exists outweighs relayed facts to the extent that whites stubbornly stand behind capital punishment even more.

A few studies have also examined the malleability of support for affirmative action with regard to what it actually entails and what problem it is used to alleviate. As detailed earlier, whites are more likely to support affirmative action as a response to companies' blatant discrimination than as a response to underrepresentation (Stoker 1998). Furthermore, in the context of affirmative action as a response to discrimination, whites are largely opposed to giving "preference" to qualified blacks, yet a majority support making an "extra effort" to consider qualified blacks (Stoker 1998). This implies that white opposition to affirmative action and endorsement of colorblindness in admissions is not necessarily generated by the race-targeted aspect of affirmative action programs, but rather the principle of fairness and meritocracy that reassure them that selection decisions are based upon applicant qualifications, not race. Endorsement of the merit principle predicts opposition to affirmative action, while diversity valuation predicts support (Aberson 2007). Additionally, when members of a majority group learn that *they* are underrepresented in an institution, they may experience group threat and begin to change their attitudes toward the situation, such as standing behind the concept of meritocracy less. For example, Samson (2013) notes that when whites are primed with Asian overrepresentation, they downplay the importance of grade point average (a measure believed to be meritocratic) in admissions, while they prioritize grade point average when primed with

overrepresentation of blacks (as well as blacks *and* Asians simultaneously). This emerging field which uses various question frames to test the malleability of attitudes on race has informed this project on a theoretical and methodological level.

Expanding Existing Research

While these emerging studies have introduced the concept of malleability of attitudes toward affirmative action, important questions about the nature of extent of adaptability of such beliefs remain. This project seeks to further an understanding of malleability in colorblind beliefs and take a more elaborate look at how attitudes may shift depending on the context and level of underrepresentation. It will also examine the relationship those patterns of attitudes toward affirmative action have with endorsement of colorblind ideals. To do this, I use an innovative experimental design: participants completed surveys that pose various levels of group representation on a hypothetical college campus, allowing me to examine how opposition to affirmative action and endorsement of colorblindness might shift in various contexts. Participants also provided qualitative comments about why they chose to support or oppose efforts to increase underrepresented groups in the context they were randomly assigned. This study design, then, allows me to rigorously consider how group representation matters for support for university efforts to increase racial diversity, while also capturing qualitatively participants' explanations for their responses.

I expect to find overall differences in participants' level of support depending on the context, i.e., the demographics of the college in the condition they were assigned to. Based on prior research (e.g., Samson 2013), there is reason to believe that people may be more supportive of affirmative action when whites are the underrepresented group. I also hypothesize that support for university efforts to increase students of underrepresented groups has an inverse relationship

to endorsement of colorblind ideology and the belief in a post-racial society across contexts. However, these beliefs (as well as control variables) will likely not explain away the effects of college demographics. Exploring these relationships will ideally deepen sociology's understanding of how colorblind ideology operates. This would help conceptualize the effects of white privilege as well as understand how majority group members may become motivated to support social change.

Methods

Sample

A sample of 553 adults living in the United States participated in this study by taking a survey online via Amazon Mechanical Turk. (The survey instrument is available in Appendix A.) Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk) is a web-based service that connects investigators with a pool of thousands of potential research participants who typically work for small compensations. Samples and results collected from mTurk have not been found to substantially differ from those found in the lab or in telephone surveys (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling 2011; Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema 2013; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis 2010). To better assure the validity of data, mTurk allows researchers to make a survey available only to participants who have a certain approval rate on tasks they have already completed. I chose 95 percent approval as the minimum for taking this survey. After eliminating participants who failed the validity questions and did not answer the primary research question, 512 participants were included in data analysis.

Variables

The primary dependent variable of interest concerns level of *support for increased university efforts to increase racial underrepresentation in the student population*. Each survey presents a scenario involving a hypothetical university and asks for the participant's level of support for this university putting forth greater effort to increase the number of students in underrepresented groups. Each participant receives one, randomly assigned description of the university. This description of the hypothetical school is the same in all instances, except for the racial composition of the student body, which ranges from whites being dramatically overrepresented to dramatically underrepresented. Given that context, participants then describe the degree to which they support or oppose efforts to improve racial representation in the student population at the hypothetical university by choosing (1) strongly support, (2) moderately support, (3) slightly support, (4) neutral/don't know, (5) slightly oppose, (6) moderately oppose, and (7) strongly oppose. This continuous measure captures level of support, with higher numbers indicating increasing opposition to university efforts to increase racial diversity. Though the phrase "affirmative action" is not explicitly used in the primary question, this study essentially asks how unequal a school's demographics must be in order to motivate participants to support taking "affirmative action" in the original legal sense of the term to increase underrepresented groups' presence at the university. As the general population becomes increasingly opposed to "affirmative action" as a code for preferential treatment, a wider conceptualization of such policies and actions can be helpful to connect the current body of literature on the topic to future research that will likely use different language to prompt participants.

The primary independent variable of interest is the *assigned condition*. When presented with the hypothetical university, participants receive one of five randomly assigned description

of the racial composition of the student body. These five descriptions are 1) 95 percent white students and 5 percent students of other races; 2) 75 percent white students and 25 percent students of other races; 3) 50 percent white students and 50 percent students of other races; 4) 25 percent white students and 75 percent students of other races; and 5) 5 percent white students and 95 percent students of other races. The assignment variable, then, captures the randomly assigned description the participant received, with the variable scaled from 1 (for the 95 percent white condition) to 5 (for the five percent white condition).

Other important independent variables capture participants' specific attitudes about contemporary racial ideology. All attitudinal variables are measured as continuous variables scaled from (1) "strongly agree" to (7) "strongly disagree". The survey items were taken from (or influenced by) the Modern Racism Scale (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter 1995), the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne 2000), and common themes in interviews by Bonilla-Silva (2014). *Colorblind admissions* captures participants' level of agreement with the colorblind statement, "When colleges are designing the admissions process, race of the applicants should never be taken into account." *American sole identity* reflects the colorblind, assimilationist assertion that, "It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American." The next two measures are intended to measure ideas of a post-racial society. *U.S. is equal opportunity* corresponds to respondents' agreement with, "Society in the U.S. has reached a point where all racial groups have equal opportunities for achievement," a statement that is considered a necessary element of colorblind ideology. Similarly, *reverse discrimination* measures level of agreement with "Since the Civil Rights movement and policies of affirmative action, discrimination against white people is now a bigger problem than discrimination against blacks,"

implying that perhaps efforts to create equality have gone “too far.” Finally, *social policies necessary* gauges participants’ level of agreement with a more race-conscious idea, that “Due to racial discrimination, social policies such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.”

In addition to these variables of theoretical interest, I also include control variables for other characteristics that may affect level of support for affirmative action. *Gender* is measured with a dummy variable coded 1 for male and 0 for female¹. In the interest of focusing on whiteness and privilege for analysis, *race* of participants was simply captured with a dummy variable where "white" is coded 1 and "people of color" (or "non-white") are coded 0². *Level of education* is measured with a series of dichotomous dummy variables for highest level of education attained: high school or less; some college, Associate’s degree, or technical school; Bachelor’s degree; and graduate school. Having a Bachelor’s degree is the reference group. Participants reported *income* as their average household income. In analysis, income is measured as a series of dummy variables for income categories of \$0-24,999, \$25,000-49,999, \$50,000-74,999, or \$75,000 and up, where the group \$25,000-49,999 per year serves as the referent. *Age* is measured with dummy variables for categories of 18-24 years, 25-34 years, and 35 years and up. The group 25-34 years of age serves as the reference group. Location of *residency* is similarly measured with three dummy variables for participants living in a city, suburb, and small town/rural area, where the suburban group serves as the referent. I measure political ideology with two variables. *Political ideology (social)* measures the respondent’s self-reported political orientation on social issues on a scale from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7

¹ Although sex and gender are not dichotomous, participants who selected “other” and “nonbinary” as their gender were very few (N=2), so they were omitted from analysis. Furthermore, from a theoretical standpoint, the variable of interest is male identity in contrast to all other gender identities.

² Sample sizes for individual racial minority groups were not large enough to justifiably analyze them separately, and as with gender, majority identity is the theoretical variable of interest.

(extremely conservative). Identically scaled from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative), *political ideology (economic)* captures one's political orientation on economic issues.

Analytic Strategy

First I present descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analyses. Then I use a one-way ANOVA with post-hoc tests to determine if there are significant differences in level of support for university efforts to increase students of underrepresented groups depending on the racial composition of the hypothetical university as well as where significant differences lie. Afterwards I use OLS regression to first model the effects various aspects of racial ideology as well as the racial composition of the hypothetical university (the assignment condition) and the race of the participant have on support for university efforts to increase racial diversity. Further regression models consider these effects net of a host of control variables to flesh out whether any significant relationship between assigned condition and support for university efforts is altered by background and contextual factors such as gender, education, and income. Finally, to supplement the quantitative results, I briefly consider respondents' qualitative comments that clarify their position on university efforts to increase racial diversity.

Results

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the sample's demographics and key variables of interest. In the sample, all levels of education, residency, and income are fairly well represented. The sample has an overrepresentation of males (59 percent) and is skewed young with 71 percent of participants under age 35. The racial composition is close to the

general population of the United States (75 percent white, 25 percent people of color)³. The sample self-reported their political ideology as slightly liberal on social issues ($\bar{x} = 2.96$, $SD = 1.64$) but closer to the middle on economic issues ($\bar{x} = 3.67$, $SD = 1.72$). Overall patterns in racial ideology suggest an even spread of attitudes toward contemporary racism on a scale from (1) strongly agree to (7) strongly disagree. The sample is slightly inclined to agree with the statements such as, “When colleges are designing the admissions process, race of the applicants should never be taken into account” ($\bar{x} = 3.04$, $SD = 1.85$) and “It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American” ($\bar{x} = 3.18$, $SD = 1.86$). There is a balance of opinions toward the statement, “Due to racial discrimination, social policies such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality” ($\bar{x} = 4.06$, $SD = 1.74$). However, the sample overall slightly disagrees that the United States has reached racial equality (“Society in the U.S. has reached a point where all racial groups have equal opportunities for achievement,” $\bar{x} = 4.60$, $SD = 1.83$) and that discrimination against white people is now the primary form of racism (“Since the Civil Rights movement and policies of affirmative action, discrimination against white people is now a bigger problem than discrimination against blacks,” $\bar{x} = 5.02$, $SD = 1.78$).

Table 1 about here.

On average, the sample was slightly supportive of university efforts to increase students of underrepresented groups across conditions on a scale from 1 to 7 (1 being strongly support and 7 being strongly oppose) ($\bar{x} = 3.83$). As seen in Table 2, ANOVA results show that support varies across all conditions, ($F(4, 507) = 5.840$, $p < .001$). However, only some of the between-group differences are significant (Table 3). The primary difference of theoretical interest is the levels of support between the 95 percent white condition and the 5 percent white condition.

³ Asian Americans are slightly overrepresented but still only comprise 9% of the sample.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis on the effect of demographics at the college, Tukey post-hoc comparisons⁴ of all five groups indicate that participants assigned to the 95 percent white condition ($\bar{x} = 3.24$) were significantly more supportive of university efforts to increase diversity than the participants assigned to the 5 percent white condition ($\bar{x} = 4.08$), $p < .01$. The largest mean difference was found between the conditions 95 percent white ($\bar{x} = 3.24$) and 50 percent white ($\bar{x} = 4.25$), $p < .001$. Other significant mean differences were found between 95 percent white ($\bar{x} = 4.08$) and 25 percent white ($\bar{x} = 3.93$), as well as 50 percent white ($\bar{x} = 4.25$) and 75 percent white ($\bar{x} = 3.62$), both at $p < .05$. Comparisons between the other conditions were not statistically significant at $p < .05$. From condition to condition, support for greater efforts to increase underrepresented groups is at its peak in the 95 percent white condition, decreases when participants perceive the demographics as more equal, then rises slightly again when people of color are in the numerical majority. Figure 1 illustrates the differences in levels of support between conditions.

Table 2 and 3 here.

Figure 1 here.

Turning to racial ideology, Table 4 demonstrates the effects that particular elements of modern racism have on participants' support for university efforts to increase students of underrepresented groups at the hypothetical college net of the racial demographics of the school. On their own, each belief or idea about colorblindness and the state of race relations in the United States today significantly predicts participants' level of support for such efforts. For example, as one might expect, participants' level of agreement with, "Due to racial discrimination, social policies such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality" is

⁴ Given that the likelihood of committing a Type I error increases when t-testing multiple sub-groups combinations, I report the more conservative Tukey HSD results. The results are similar to, yet with larger predicted probabilities than t-tests of mean differences for each of the condition combinations.

a predictor of their support for university efforts at this particular hypothetical college ($b = 0.529$, $p < .001$). Similarly, on its own, race of participant is strongly correlated to their support for university efforts with whites opposing more than people of color ($b = 0.739$, $p < .001$). However, the effect of race declines (but remains significant) when the model takes all racial ideology items into account ($b = 0.331$, $p < .05$). Perhaps most importantly, the relevance of assigned condition remains relatively steady in every model, even after racial ideology and racial identity are taken into account. In the final model (adjusted $R^2 = 0.37$), assigned condition is still a significant predictor of support for university efforts ($b = 0.161$, $p < .001$), as are the beliefs that college admissions should be colorblind ($b = -0.196$, $p < .001$) and that social policies like affirmative action are necessary to help create equality ($b = 0.368$, $p < .001$). Racial ideology is a relevant factor in predicting support for university efforts, but it does not explain away the effect of assigned condition.

Table 5 looks at these relationships after controlling for the demographic variables of political ideology, education, location of residence, age, income, and gender.⁵ While including the control variables improves model fit (adjusted $R^2 = 0.39$), their inclusion does not substantially alter the key relationships of interest. Compared to the models in Table 4, race and racial ideology items in Table 5 perform in the same ways before and after adding control variables. Once again, assigned condition is still a significant predictor of support for university efforts to increase racial diversity ($b = 0.169$, $p < .001$), as are the beliefs that college admissions

⁴ Of these variables, few are significantly related to participants' level of support for university efforts in the final model ($R^2 = 0.39$). Participants with a high school diploma or less were more supportive of university efforts than college graduates ($b = -0.602$, $p < .01$), while those with other levels of education were not significantly different than college graduates. The more conservative participants are in their political ideology on economic issues, the less supportive they are of university efforts ($b = 0.106$, $p < .05$), while political ideology on social issues interestingly did not matter. Finally, male participants were significantly less likely to support university efforts than female participants ($b = 0.323$, $p < .05$).

should be colorblind ($b = -0.212, p < .001$) and that social policies like affirmative action are necessary to help create equality ($b = 0.323, p < .001$).

To take a closer look at where malleability lies, I separately analyzed the data for respondents with the strongest expressions of colorblindness and respondents with more neutral attitudes toward colorblindness (see Table 6)⁶. For the more opinionated respondents ($N=229$), the demographic description of the hypothetical college did not significantly matter for their level of support for university efforts to increase underrepresented groups in the bivariate model and was only slightly significant in the full regression model ($b = 0.144, p < .05$). On the other hand, participants who responded to the statement that college admissions should be colorblind with “slightly agree,” “neutral/don’t know,” or “slightly oppose” ($N=223$) are significantly more influenced by the hypothetical college’s demographics in both bivariate and full regression analysis ($b = 0.265, p < .001$).

To supplement the quantitative findings, I considered participants’ qualitative comments to why they support or oppose university efforts to increase students of underrepresented groups at the hypothetical college. Of those who answered “strongly support” or “moderately support,” the overwhelming majority gave comments that reflected either a value of diversity or an acknowledgement of affirmative action as necessary to remedy inequality. People who answered “slightly support” or “neutral/don’t know” often made comments that contained “both sides” of the affirmative action argument or conflicting thoughts about the topic (e.g., “On one hand, it is good to have more diversity. On the other hand, people should be accepted based on merit and not race”). Those who were opposed (slightly, moderately, or strongly) to university efforts overwhelmingly asserted colorblind ideals and the common frames of meritocracy and freedom

⁶ There are too few opponents of colorblindness to have confidence on models run separately on them.

of choice. These patterns are quite consistent regardless of which demographic composition the respondent received, thus supplementing the findings of Aberson (2007) and Bonilla-Silva (2014).

Discussion

Scholars consider colorblind ideology a substantial impediment toward racial equality in a society that is still racist. In order to hypothesize solutions, we must first understand the relationship colorblindness has to support for social change in various contexts. In theory, people who are committed to colorblindness would endorse race-blind admissions and other university practices regardless of the demographics at a college, but is this what the data indicate? This study tests the potential malleability of those attitudes as well as their relationship to specific colorblind beliefs.

As predicted, participants in this study overall vary in their support for university efforts to increase racial diversity based on the demographics at the college. This demonstrates that attitudes toward affirmative action are malleable and that colorblindness is not steady regardless of context. If there is severe underrepresentation (either of whites or of people of color), people become overall more supportive of increasing the number of students in the underrepresented group.. The flexibility of support shows that many participants may sense a violation of procedural fairness when there is dramatic underrepresentation. However, these optimistic findings are tempered somewhat by the subgroup analysis. Those who are more neutral about colorblindness clearly show differences in their support for university efforts to enhance diversity depending on the racial composition of the school described to them. The strongly colorblind group, however, may not demonstrate that same level of malleability. The mixed

results – context does not matter in the bivariate models but reaches significance (barely) at $p < .05$ in the comprehensive model – suggest the need for more research on this subgroup. Pinpointing any variations in malleability by subgroup has important implications for what actions to take to reduce inequality.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis regarding *where* the differences lie, participants were significantly more supportive of university efforts to increase racial diversity in the 95 percent white group compared to the 5 percent white group. It is possible that this can be attributed to the already-formed opinions people have for situations in which whites are overrepresented, so they do more “new thinking” when faced with a less typical context. Qualitatively, more people said they needed more information when people of color represented 50 percent or more of the student population at the college. Another possible explanation revealed in the qualitative comments is the salience of “non-white” as the target identity for affirmative action. When the hypothetical college’s demographics became 50 percent white or less, some participants misunderstood the question and assumed they were being asked if the school should try to increase the number of people of color, even though the language used in the question was always “underrepresented groups.” This led to remarks like, “I oppose because the college is already 75% minorities, they don’t need any more.” This misunderstanding can also be considered a limitation of this study, though the number of answers like this is small. In the larger picture, despite the differences between conditions, participants’ feelings toward the university making efforts to increase diversity are ultimately just varying levels of lukewarm, and those with the strongest colorblind attitudes do not appear to shift that stance regardless of demographic context. In future research, one could refine these conditions to be less extreme as well as be clearer that “underrepresented” means numerically underrepresented regardless of

race. Following the examples of Stoker (1998) and Samson (2013), researchers could also more explicitly incorporate a threat to meritocracy and a history of discriminatory practices at the college to see how the pattern in attitudes may be different. This field may also gain insight by comparing the patterns in this study with patterns in attitudes about such efforts for *gender* equality.

Perhaps most importantly, as predicted, colorblind ideology shapes support for university efforts to increase racial diversity, but the relationship between assigned condition and support persists even when ideology is taken into account. Colorblindness is shown to be a significant barrier to addressing inequality, but the demonstrated malleability of attitudes toward university efforts to alleviate underrepresentation provides a glimmer of hope that attitudes are not static and that people do have some sense of justice based on the degree of underrepresentation. Additionally, because participants support university efforts significantly more when people of color are underrepresented than when whites are underrepresented, it suggests that they could be less resistant and more race-conscious than studies using different techniques have found (e.g., Peffley & Hurwitz 2007). However, while the overall sample was significantly swayed by university demographics, participants with strong or moderate colorblind beliefs were far more consistent in their answers across conditions. This demonstrates that although we can be optimistic about change, we must be aware that subgroups in the population do not all respond to information in the same way. Increased knowledge of racial disparities in higher education (*and* the causes) could indeed invoke more support for race-conscious actions, especially among those who do not strongly believe that colorblindness is an ideal way of thinking about race. This dialogue could simultaneously address those with stronger beliefs by using what sociologists already know about how to teach to overcome ideological resistance to the idea of oppression

(e.g., Bohmer & Briggs 1991) and expanding the dialogue to accessible media outside of higher education. This requires meaningful efforts by people with power (overwhelmingly white) to confront the lasting effects of America's legacy of racism and address both discrimination and covert institutional inequalities, going beyond superficially equal access or treatment. Future research could better identify what kind of efforts people who strongly endorse colorblindness *would* support, thus enabling researchers to better determine not only which policies and actions are more realistic at present, but perhaps which specific racial ideologies or values are challenged by the actions that are opposed. While this study's slightly young sample limits its generalizability, it arguably captures a more accurate picture of the attitudes of the near future as race-conscious policies like affirmative action continue to lose support.

These results also need to be grounded in the broader discussion in which that alleviating racial inequality and dismantling white supremacy are not simply a matter of changing attitudes or changing structure, but both. We are in an era when many white Americans believe that civil rights laws ended racial inequality simply by making discrimination illegal, and we believe this to such an extent that we are now striking down particular laws that protect the rights of minorities (see *Shelby County v Holder*, *Schuetz v Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action*). Privilege is blinding enough to cause substantial gaps between whites and blacks in their perceptions of racial inequality (e.g., Pew Research Center 2013). Realistically, what can we do to reduce institutional racism in a society that believes it no longer exists? If affirmative action is on its last legs, what actions can we take to produce similar results? Considering that colorblind attitudes do not account for contextual differences in level of support for affirmative action-like efforts at a university, perhaps we should move beyond debating the specifics of affirmative

action and discuss on a much larger scale how we can talk about race and eventually change the dynamics of distribution and accumulation of power and resources.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Higher means indicate more opposition/disagreement)

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dependent Variables					
Support for University Efforts (Overall)	512	3.83	1.72	1	7
Support for University Efforts by Condition					
95% white	100	3.24	1.80	1	7
75% white	107	3.62	1.74	1	7
50% white	113	4.25	1.64	1	7
25% white	95	3.93	1.52	1	7
5% white	97	4.08	1.66	1	7
Independent Variables: Theoretical					
Colorblind admissions	506	3.04	1.85	1	7
American sole identity	512	3.18	1.86	1	7
U.S. is equal opportunity	512	4.60	1.83	1	7
Reverse discrimination	508	5.02	1.78	1	7
Social policies necessary	510	4.06	1.74	1	7
Independent Variables: Controls					
Gender	502				
Male		0.59			
Female		0.41			
Race	508				
White		0.75			
People of color		0.25			
Education	511				
High school or less		0.12			
Some college, Associate's, technical		0.42			
Bachelor's degree		0.33			
Graduate school		0.14			
Income	510				
\$0-24,999		0.27			
\$25,000-49,999		0.31			
\$50,000-74,999		0.21			
\$75,000 and up		0.21			
Age	501				
Age 18-24		0.33			
Age 25-34		0.38			
Age 35 and up		0.29			
Residency	509				
City		0.32			
Suburb		0.40			
Rural		0.28			
Political ideology (social)	509	2.96	1.64	1	7
Political ideology (economic)	510	3.67	1.72	1	7

Table 2: ANOVA Results for Support for University Efforts to Increase Students of Underrepresented Racial Groups (N = 512)

	Sum of Squares	DF	Eta ²	F
Total	1508.88	511	0.044	5.840***

* p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Figure 1: Level of Support for University Efforts to Increase Students of Underrepresented Racial Groups by Condition

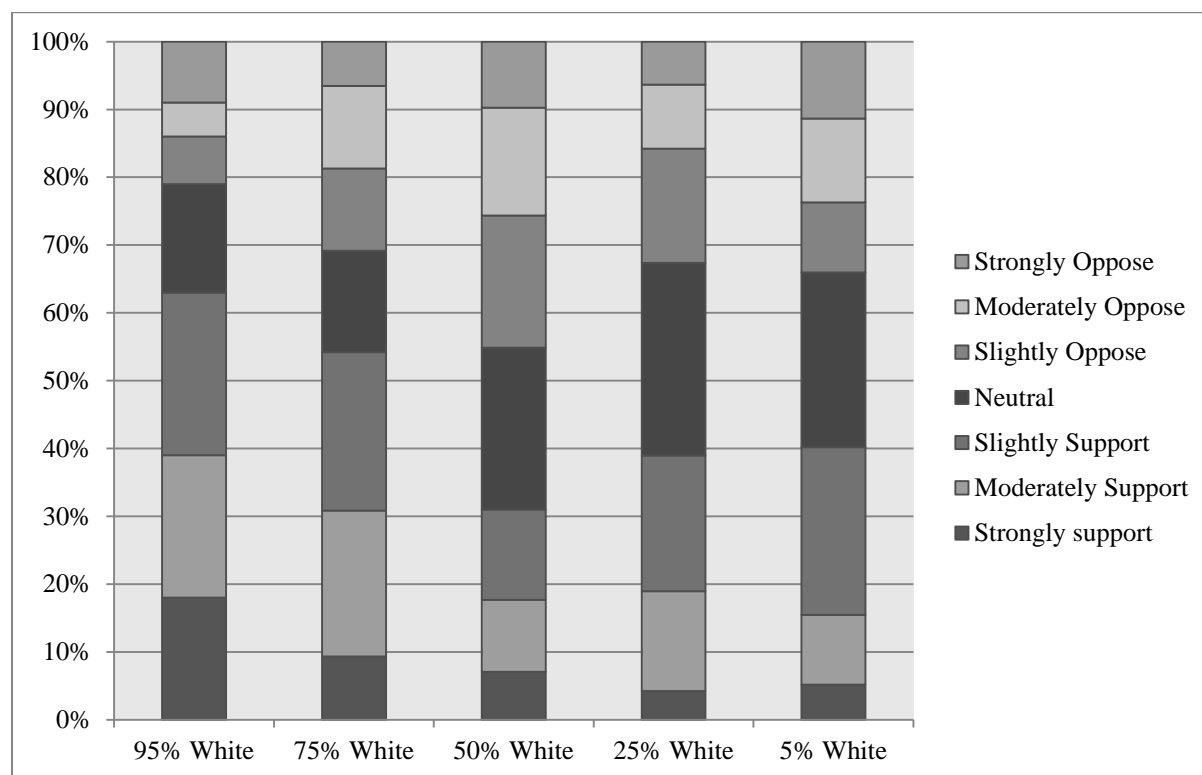


Table 3: Results of Support for University Efforts to Increase Students of Underrepresented Racial Groups by Racial Composition of School. Group Comparisons Showing Mean Differences. (N = 512)

	95% white	75% white	50% white	25% white	5% white
95% white	-----	-0.377	-1.008***	-0.686*	-0.842**
75% white	0.377	-----	-0.631*	-0.309	-0.466
50% white	1.008***	0.631*	-----	0.321	0.165
25% white	0.686*	0.309	-0.321	-----	-0.156
5% white	0.842**	0.466	-0.165	0.156	-----

* p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Table 4: OLS Regression of Racial Ideology and Race on Support for University Efforts to Increase Students of Underrepresented Racial Groups.
(N=512; Support measured on scale from 1 as strongly support to 7 as strongly oppose)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)
Colorblind admissions	-0.416*** (0.036)						-0.196*** (0.040)
American sole identity		-0.181*** (0.040)					0.036 (0.038)
U.S. is equal opportunity			-0.296*** (0.039)				-0.069 (0.042)
Reverse discrimination				-0.313*** (0.040)			-0.072 (0.042)
Social policies necessary					0.529*** (0.036)		0.368*** (0.042)
White						0.739*** (0.218)	0.331* (0.145)
Assignment	0.186*** (0.048)	0.213*** (0.053)	0.221*** (0.051)	0.182*** (0.051)	0.155*** (0.046)	0.214*** (0.053)	0.161*** (0.045)
Constant	4.569*** (0.194)	3.771*** (0.210)	4.534*** (0.240)	4.862*** (0.264)	1.220*** (0.203)	2.633*** (0.218)	2.773*** (0.374)
Adjusted R ²	0.22	0.06	0.12	0.13	0.31	0.06	0.37

* p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Table 5: OLS Regression of All Independent Variables on Support for University Efforts. (N = 512; Support measured on scale from 1 as strongly support to 7 as strongly oppose)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)
Colorblind admissions	-0.357*** (0.037)						-0.212*** (0.041)
American sole identity		-0.096* (0.041)					0.070 (0.039)
U.S. is equal opportunity			-0.196*** (0.044)				-0.049 (0.044)
Reverse discrimination				-0.227*** (0.043)			-0.066 (0.044)
Social policies necessary					0.459*** (0.041)		0.323*** (0.044)
White						0.653*** (0.169)	0.376* (0.150)
Assignment	0.201*** (0.047)	0.222*** (0.051)	0.232*** (0.051)	0.206*** (0.050)	0.170*** (0.046)	0.217*** (0.051)	0.169*** (0.045)
Political ideology (social)	0.053 (0.054)	0.040 (0.058)	-0.008 (0.058)	-0.022 (0.058)	-0.005 (0.052)	0.062 (0.058)	-0.007 (0.053)
Political ideology (economic)	0.171*** (0.052)	0.245*** (0.056)	0.208*** (0.056)	0.249*** (0.054)	0.120* (0.051)	0.251*** (0.055)	0.106* (0.050)
High school	-0.710** (0.226)	-0.685** (0.246)	-0.721** (0.242)	-0.663** (0.240)	-0.507* (0.220)	-0.722** (0.244)	-0.602** (0.212)
Some college	-0.074 (0.156)	-0.036 (0.168)	-0.068 (0.166)	-0.005 (0.165)	-0.030 (0.151)	-0.027 (0.167)	-0.067 (0.147)
Graduate school	-0.292 (0.216)	-0.434 (0.235)	-0.436 (0.231)	-0.330 (0.230)	-0.466* (0.210)	-0.539* (0.234)	-0.381 (0.205)
City	-0.208 (0.159)	-0.332 (0.171)	-0.312 (0.169)	-0.292 (0.169)	-0.234 (0.154)	-0.263 (0.172)	-0.102 (0.151)
Rural	-0.035 (0.167)	0.025 (0.181)	0.018 (0.178)	-0.081 (0.178)	0.010 (0.162)	-0.034 (0.180)	-0.069 (0.158)

Table 5 Continued: OLS Regression of All Independent Variables on Support for University Efforts. (N = 512; Support measured on scale from 1 as strongly support to 7 as strongly oppose)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
	b	b	b	b	b	b	b
	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)	(s.e.)
Age 18-24	-0.005 (0.162)	0.023 (0.176)	-0.009 (0.173)	-0.006 (0.172)	-0.037 (0.157)	0.034 (0.174)	0.022 (0.152)
Age 35 and up	0.139 (0.167)	0.088 (0.181)	0.143 (0.178)	0.042 (0.177)	0.070 (0.162)	0.040 (0.181)	0.064 (0.159)
Income \$0-\$24,999	0.025 (0.174)	0.121 (0.188)	0.090 (0.186)	0.040 (0.185)	0.020 (0.169)	0.069 (0.187)	-0.088 (0.164)
Income \$50,000-\$74,999	-0.042 (0.188)	-0.032 (0.203)	-0.043 (0.200)	0.042 (0.198)	-0.137 (0.182)	-0.004 (0.201)	-0.088 (0.176)
Income \$75,000 and up	0.156 (0.192)	0.112 (0.208)	0.110 (0.205)	0.190 (0.202)	0.016 (0.186)	0.100 (0.207)	0.045 (0.181)
Male	0.428** (0.138)	0.449** (0.151)	0.426** (0.148)	0.496*** (0.146)	0.308* (0.135)	0.452** (0.147)	0.323* (0.133)
Constant	3.440*** (0.325)	2.332*** (0.348)	3.212*** (0.413)	3.358*** (0.407)	1.014*** (0.287)	1.492*** (0.327)	2.345*** (0.462)
Adjusted R ²	0.29	0.16	0.19	0.20	0.33	0.18	0.39

* p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Table 6: OLS Regression on Support for University Efforts for Subgroups (Support measured on scale from 1 as strongly support to 7 as strongly oppose)

	Strongly or moderately agree with colorblindness (N=229)		Slightly agree, slightly oppose, or neutral about colorblindness (N=223)	
	Model 1 b (s.e.)	Model 2 b (s.e.)	Model 3 b (s.e.)	Model 4 b (s.e.)
Colorblind admissions		-0.257 (0.237)		-0.131 (0.224)
American sole identity		0.128 (0.066)		0.041 (0.056)
U.S. is equal opportunity		-0.009 (0.890)		-0.076 (0.286)
Reverse discrimination		-0.151* (0.066)		0.053 (0.067)
Social policies necessary		0.374*** (0.066)		0.229** (0.075)
White		0.493 (0.272)		0.088 (0.200)
Assignment	0.073 (0.079)	0.144* (0.072)	0.267*** (0.063)	0.265*** (0.064)
Political ideology (social)		-0.006 (0.085)		0.042 (0.079)
Political ideology (economic)		0.181* (0.083)		0.078 (0.070)
High school		-0.847* (0.348)		-0.526 (0.281)
Some college		-0.125 (0.236)		-0.021 (0.202)
Graduate school		-0.938* (0.374)		-0.173 (0.285)
City		-0.138 (0.258)		-0.173 (0.202)

	Strongly or moderately agree with colorblindness (N=229)		Slightly agree, slightly oppose, or neutral about colorblindness (N=223)	
	Model 1 b (s.e.)	Model 2 b (s.e.)	Model 3 b (s.e.)	Model 4 b (s.e.)
Rural		-0.287 (0.252)		-0.003 (0.220)
Age 18-24		-0.199 (0.254)		0.031 (0.206)
Age 35 and up		-0.213 (0.259)		0.291 (0.237)
Income \$0-\$24,999		-0.368 (0.270)		0.163 (0.229)
Income \$50,000-\$74,999		-0.284 (0.286)		0.075 (0.247)
Income \$75,000 and up		-0.326 (0.309)		0.244 (0.240)
Male		0.458* (0.217)		0.160 (0.182)
Constant	4.412 (0.261)	2.369 (0.727)	2.564 (0.206)	1.652 (0.794)
Adjusted R ²	0.004	0.291	0.072	0.168

* p<.05

** p<.01

*** p<.001

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

1. This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Bobbitt-Zeher, Assistant Professor of Sociology, at The Ohio State University at Marion.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized.

The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take approximately 10 minutes. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address, or IP address. The survey questions will be about your opinions toward college admission policies, contemporary social issues, and your background.

Your information will be kept confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

This research has been reviewed according to The Ohio State University IRB procedures for research involving human subjects. If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Hannah Russell at russell.790@osu.edu.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study or if you are under 18 years of age, please decline participation by clicking on the "I do not agree to participate" button.



I agree to participate



I do not agree to participate

The following questions ask for your opinion about a few issues affecting education policies.

[Participants randomly assigned to one of ten conditions for question #2]

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. As of 2013, the student population at University X is about 95% white and 5% other races (black, Hispanic, etc.). Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose racial group(s) are underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. As of 2013, the student population at University X is about 75% white and 25% other races (black, Hispanic, etc.). Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose racial group(s) are underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. As of 2013, the student population at University X is about 50% white and 50% other races (black, Hispanic, etc.). Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose racial group(s) are underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. As of 2013, the student population at University X is about 25% white and 75% other races (black, Hispanic, etc.). Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose racial group(s) are underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. As of 2013, the student population at University X is about 5% white and 95% other races (black, Hispanic, etc.). Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose racial group(s) are underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. The students who are attending University X in 2013 are 95% male and 5% female. Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose gender is underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. The students who are attending University X in 2013 are 75% male and 25% female. Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose gender is underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. The students who are attending University X in 2013 are 50% male and 50% female. Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose gender is underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. The students who are attending University X in 2013 are 25% male and 75% female. Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose gender is underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

2. University X is a relatively large college in the United States. The students who are attending University X in 2013 are 5% male and 95% female. Some people believe that universities should put more effort into increasing the number of students whose gender is underrepresented at their schools, while others do not believe this. How much would you support or oppose such efforts in the case of University X?

Strongly support	Moderately support	Slightly support	Neutral/don't know	Slightly oppose	Moderately oppose	Strongly oppose
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3. Please explain or comment on your answer to question #2:

4. If you could decide how colleges admitted applicants, how important would each of the following criteria be? Please rate each criterion on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not at all important and 10 being extremely important.

Grade point average	<input type="text"/>
Standardized test scores	<input type="text"/>
Letters of recommendation	<input type="text"/>
Community service and extracurricular activities	<input type="text"/>
Economic disadvantage	<input type="text"/>
Leadership experience	<input type="text"/>
Veteran status as a means of increasing diversity	<input type="text"/>
Race as a means of increasing diversity	<input type="text"/>
Gender as a means of increasing diversity	<input type="text"/>
Writing samples (e.g., an essay they wrote)	<input type="text"/>

The following questions ask about your opinions on contemporary social issues.

5. Society in the U.S. has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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6. Over the past few years, the news media have shown racism to be a bigger problem than it really is.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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7. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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8. Due to racial discrimination, social policies such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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9. It is important that schools and employers put effort toward getting women into fields where they are underrepresented (e.g., engineering).

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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10. I have a strong reaction when I notice something that is unjust, unfair, or discriminatory.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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11. When colleges are designing the admissions process, race of the applicants should never be taken into account.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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12. To show that you are paying attention, please select "Neutral."

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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13. In the U.S., women do not have the same opportunities as men.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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14. In the Middle East, women do not have the same opportunities as men.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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15. Since the Civil Rights movement and policies of affirmative action, discrimination against white people is now a bigger problem than discrimination against blacks.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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16. I'm passionate about making the world a better place.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

17. The best way to get rid of racism is to stop talking about it.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

18. Regardless of our social class, we all have the same opportunities to succeed.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

19. Some people have to work harder than others to get the same result.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

20. When colleges are designing the admissions process, gender of the applicants should never be taken into account.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

21. In recent years, the news media have shown sexism against women to be a bigger problem than it really is.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

22. To show that you are paying attention, please select "Moderately disagree."

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

23. Society in the U.S. has reached a point where all racial groups have equal opportunities for achievement.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

24. People with significant power and money should use it to help the less fortunate.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	------------------	----------------	---------	-------------------	---------------------	-------------------

25. Given the feminist movement and increase of women in college, discrimination against men is now a bigger problem than discrimination against women.

Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Slightly agree	Neutral	Slightly disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
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26. What is your age?

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75 or over

27. What is your gender?

Man

Woman

Nonbinary

Other

28. What is your race and/or ethnicity? Select all that apply.

White

Black or African American

Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Other (please specify)

29. How would you describe your political ideology with regards to *economic issues*?

Strongly liberal

Moderately liberal

Slightly liberal

Neutral/don't know

Slightly conservative

Moderately conservative

Strongly conservative

30. How would you describe your political ideology with regards to *social issues*?

Strongly liberal

Moderately liberal

Slightly liberal

Neutral/don't know

Slightly conservative

Moderately conservative

Strongly conservative

31. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Did not complete high school

Graduated from high school (diploma or GED)

Technical college certificate

Some college, no degree

Associate's degree

Bachelor's degree

Some graduate school

Master's degree

Doctorate or equivalent degree

32. Which of the following best describes your current area of work?

Unemployed

Management Occupations

Business and Financial Operations Occupations

Computer and Mathematical Occupations

Architecture and Engineering Occupations

Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations

Community and Social Service Occupations

Legal Occupations

Education, Training, and Library Occupations

Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations

Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations

Healthcare Support Occupations

Protective Service Occupations

Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations

Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations

Personal Care and Service Occupations

Sales and Related Occupations

Office and Administrative Support Occupations

Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations

Construction and Extraction Occupations

Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations

Production Occupations

Transportation and Materials Moving Occupations

33. Which of these options *best* describes the area where you currently live?

Major city

Suburb

Small town

Rural area

34. What is your approximate household income?

\$0-\$24,999

\$25,000-\$49,999

\$50,000-\$74,999

\$75,000-\$99,999

\$100,000-\$124,999

\$125,000-\$149,999

\$150,000-\$174,999

\$175,000-\$199,999

\$200,000 and up